



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONER'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL SUMMARY

OCT. 27, 2020

PRESENT: Caleb Wallace Bates, Trevin Bevins, Madelyn Blankenship, Gavin Breunig, Drake Calhoon, Mi'Keyla Crumble, Reece Dicken, Robin Dutt, Sofie Farmer, Renuka Gentela, Soleila Elliot Gonzalez, Peyton Hall, Laila Hayes, Elizabeth Holcomb, Jack Johnson, Logan Justice, Loren Little, Miles McGinnis, Solyana Mesfin, Anastasia Panaretos, Kade Scott, Lauren Shackelford, Gracie Smith, Sam Smith, Lohith Tummala, Anna Williams, Amy Yang

ABSENT: Nae'Shon Harrison, Viviana Heredia

Agenda Item: Mental Health Check-In & Strategies for Coping

Presenter: Damien Sweeney, program coordinator for comprehensive school counseling, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

Summary of Discussion:

Many students were excited about sports activities, meet-ups with friends and meeting with the advisory groups. Students were concerned about upcoming college applications, the security of their parents' jobs and the number of COVID-19 cases.

The advisory suggested that they can best support one another socially and emotionally by listening to one another's ideas, regularly checking-in and sharing more personal things

Sweeney discussed coping strategies with the group.

Feedback:

When asked about takeaways from this activity for themselves, students said that they wanted to do the following in their own lives:

- Grounding strategies, self-affirmations, deep breathing, mindfulness.
- Resist urges to avoid anxiety-provoking situations.
- Walking or listening to music.
- Remember that progress isn't always linear and it is okay to fall short sometimes.
- Remembering that the stress won't last forever.

- Opening up to old friends and checking in.
- Write down what I am worrying about, and asking myself if it is worth worrying.
- Get a balanced sleep schedule.
- This storm will pass. Tough times pass, but tough people will last.

Based on strategies discussed, Students wanted to share with their school community:

- Check in on friends that you may have not talked to recently.
- Resist the urge to isolate, especially in these times.
- Whenever students are feeling stressful, they can write positive things instead of focusing on negative things.
- Help educate peers on grounding techniques and dealing with stress on their own.
- Advocate for people to reach out and get help.
- You deserve to be happy - change is worth it!
- Reflect: A bad day does not erase the progress made.
- Reassure students they can confide in others who can serve as a support system within the community to help ease stress.
- Go slow - success is defined by individual terms.
- The importance of resisting the urge to isolate; encouraging schoolmates to evaluate the likelihood of a hypothetical situation they are concerned about.
- The only way forward is through it.
- Normalizing stress and anxiety is necessary to take back to school.
- Connecting with each other, even if online, is important.
- Connect better and reach out to each other. School hallways are quiet because no one is talking to each other.

Agenda Item: Discussion about Racial Equity and Introduction of KDE's New Chief Equity Officer

Presenter: Thomas Woods-Tucker, chief equity officer and deputy commissioner, KDE Office of Teaching and Learning

Summary of Discussion:

Woods-Tucker emphasized that promoting diversity, mindfulness and equity begins with the culture of building leadership. He emphasized there is power in students being fearless in a non-confrontational way.

Woods-Tucker said having an open mind is critical to bring everyone to the table and help explain why it's important that we all come together.

He said flattening the curve of academic performance is an opportunity gap not an intellectual gap. If a minority hasn't historically had access to higher education, then the family has not had the opportunity to purchase a home in an area where there are better schools.

A support system is needed to ensure students feel comfortable in order to thrive. Student voice is the most powerful voice.

Equity (giving what is needed to be successful and grow into competent, thriving young adults) and equality (giving everyone the same thing).

Feedback:

One student asked how teachers are held accountable when they make racist comments. Todd Allen, KDE general counsel, outlined that all certified teachers are held to a code of ethics. Superintendents have a responsibility to report teacher allegations. Complaints may be shared by any community and/or school member. Teacher allegations may be addressed by the Education Professional Standards Board. Disciplinary actions may be taken.

A few council members mentioned confronting individuals who have voiced racist opinions. Kade Scott said it is easier to confront those individuals in person because online discussions are much less beneficial and much more divisive.

Council member Logan Justice had an idea to create a video with fellow members that would encourage and give hope to minority communities in Kentucky looking for change.

Follow-up Required:

Woods-Tucker asked to find out more about the United Nations program in Anastasia Panaretos' high school. Its link to equity will be discussed at a future meeting.

Toni Konz Tatman, KDE chief communications officer, said she would work with Woods-Tucker to share his story and the stories of all of the students.

Agenda Item: Kentucky Academic Standards for World Language

Presenters: Krista Hall, director, KDE Division of Program Standards

Erin Chavez, information program consultant, KDE Office of Teaching and Learning

Thomas Clouse, branch manager, KDE Division of Program Standards

Summary of Discussion:

The KDE presenters discussed the four points of the Writer's Vision Statement:

- Provide equitable opportunities and capabilities to use language and cultural knowledge to make friendships, develop and grow, and to hone the skills necessary to become successful global citizens.
- Ensure a rich exposure to and understanding of people, places and practices of the target culture, in turn enabling learners to reflect on these aspects of their own culture.
- Empower students to become individuals who are inquirers, empathetic, risk-takers, reflexive and good communicators.
- Intentionally push the focus of culture to the core of the language learning experience; the global competencies are highlighted in more detail, and sample topics related to equity are specifically included in the sample learning targets.

Feedback:

Students were asked if they agreed with the visions and if any needed to be more emphasized.

Council member Caleb Wallace Bates emphasized that the richer the exposure, the greater the understanding and respect students will have for each other.

Council member Loren Little said she agreed with this vision. Little said that the second point should have more emphasis because learning the culture of other people helps you reflect on your own culture. She said she also believed that learning about other cultures would help people to connect with them more and would cause a decline in racism or harassment of other minorities.

Council member Drake Calhoon said he thought the vision was incredibly relevant and agreed with it. Drake was encouraged that the vision speaks on the empowerment of students. Calhoon said we can always expand on educating students about different cultures because world language goes beyond phonics and grammar. It is important to elevate the multifaceted cultures around the world.

Council member Soleila Elliott Gonzalez was excited to see that LGTBQIA+ and racial friendly vocabulary and centered lessons are being considered. She said that not only does that inclusion help students as language learners but it also introduces being more inclusive in the school setting, no matter what language is being used to communicate.

Sofie Farmer said she definitely felt that the fourth bulleted item was the most important point because one of her personal interests is how gender plays a role in language.

COMM: JGG

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